

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) An exhaust gas cleaning system for an internal combustion engine, the exhaust gas cleaning system comprising:

a particulate filter, which is fixedly held by a holding member in a metallic case disposed in an exhaust pipe of the engine and collects particulate matters included in exhaust gas, wherein

the particulate filter is formed of a monolithic structural body having a multiplicity of cells provided by porous walls in parallel with flow of the exhaust gas,

the particulate filter has a particulate matter collecting area having wall flow structure, in which the cells are blocked alternately with filler on an exhaust gas inlet side or an exhaust gas outlet side of the particulate filter, and a peripheral heat-retaining layer, which is formed by blocking the cells in a peripheral area extending inward from a peripheral surface of the monolithic structural body by a predetermined width, and

the peripheral heat-retaining layer is formed by blocking the entire cells in the peripheral area only on the exhaust gas inlet side of the monolithic structural body, wherein the entire cells in the peripheral area are not blocked on the exhaust gas outlet side of the monolithic structural body. ~~body, and~~

~~the predetermined width of the peripheral heat-retaining layer ranges from 5 to 20 millimeters.~~

2. (Original) The exhaust gas cleaning system as in claim 1, wherein the monolithic structural body has a peripheral skin portion providing a peripheral wall of the monolithic structural body,

the peripheral surface of the monolithic structural body serves as a peripheral surface of the peripheral skin portion, and

the peripheral skin portion has thickness in a range from 0.2 to 1.0 millimeter.

3. (Withdrawn) The exhaust gas cleaning system as in claim 1, wherein the heat-retaining layer is formed by blocking the entire cells in the peripheral area, which extends inward from the peripheral surface of the monolithic structural body by the predetermined width, on both the exhaust gas inlet side and the exhaust gas outlet side of the monolithic structural body.

Claim 4. (Canceled).

5. (Withdrawn) The exhaust gas cleaning system as in claim 1, wherein the peripheral heat-retaining layer is formed by blocking the entire cells in the peripheral area, which extends inward from the peripheral surface of the monolithic structural body by the predetermined width, on the exhaust gas outlet side of the monolithic structural body.

6. (Original) The exhaust gas cleaning system as in claim 1, wherein the peripheral heat-retaining layer is formed by blocking the cells, which are completely or partially included in the peripheral area.

7. (Withdrawn) The exhaust gas cleaning system as in claim 1, wherein the width of the peripheral heat-retaining layer is partially changed in accordance with temperature increasing characteristics at respective peripheral portions of the monolithic structural body.

8. (Withdrawn) The exhaust gas cleaning system as in claim 1, wherein the monolithic structural body is formed so that a ratio of an area occupied by a layer of air

per unit cross-sectional area of the monolithic structural body is higher in the peripheral heat-retaining layer than in the particulate matter collecting area.

9. (Withdrawn) The exhaust gas cleaning system as in claim 8, wherein the monolithic structural body is formed so that a cell pitch of the cell is greater in the peripheral heat-retaining layer than in the particulate matter collecting area.

10. (Withdrawn) The exhaust gas cleaning system as in claim 8, wherein the cell in the peripheral heat-retaining layer is formed in a shape different from the shape of the cell in the particulate matter collecting area.

Claims 11-14. (Cancelled).

15. (Previously presented) The exhaust gas cleaning system as in claim 2, wherein the peripheral heat-retaining layer is formed by blocking the cells, which are completely or partially included in the peripheral area.

16. (New) The exhaust gas cleaning system as in claim 1, wherein the predetermined width of the peripheral heat-retaining layer ranges from 5 to 20 millimeters.